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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE 2576  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
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RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0618

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 000578

SIPDIS

PARIS PLEASE PASS TO US MISSION TO UNESCO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/17/2010

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNESCO](#) [SCUL](#) [MOPS](#) [PBTS](#) [TH](#) [CB](#)

SUBJECT: PREAH VIHEAR: TENSIONS STILL HIGH AS FACE-OFF  
CONTINUES

REF: BANGKOK 2167

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Piper Campbell, for reasons 1.5  
B and C

¶1. (C) Cambodian sources seemed increasingly anxious about continued tension along the Thai-Cambodian border July 17. A Cambodian official told the Ambassador that the RGC is seeking a face-to-face meeting early next week. A senior armed forces (RCAF) official text messaged the acting Defense Attache late in the day to say that Cambodia was responding to news of another 100 Thai military being deployed by sending "ten trucks of Cambodian gendarmes in full battle gear" to the area. In the early evening, the Council of Ministers shared with diplomatic missions a copy of the text of a letter from PM Hun Sen to PM Samak Sundaravej (text produced below.) Embassy has urged minimizing the number of troops sent to the area, noting that packing more people into an already tense atmosphere is likely to augment tensions; called on the RCAF to respond with professionalism and calm; and highlighted the importance of both countries finding a neighborly way out of this situation. Embassies Phnom Penh and Bangkok have shared information during the course of the day.

¶2. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT OF HUN SEN TO SAMAK LETTER

DEAR EXCELLENCY,

FIRST. I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE THANKS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND I WAS VERY PLEASED TO TALK WITH YOU ON THE TELEPHONE ON THE NIGHT OF 16 JULY 2008. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE, REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR TWO STATES, HAVE STILL REAFFIRMED THE ONGOING AND GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS AND LONG-LASTING COOPERATION SO THAT WE COULD RESOLVE THE PROBLEM THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AS WELL AS SETTING THE MEETING SCHEDULE BETWEEN YOUR EXCELLENCY AND HIS EXCELLENCY TEA BANH (NOTE: CAMBODIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE) ON 21 JULY 2008.

DURING OUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, I ASKED YOUR EXCELLENCY TO ORDER THE WITHDRAWAL OF THAI TROOPS FROM THE AREA OF KEO SIKHA KIRI SVARA PAGODA (CALLED PREAH VIHEAR PAGODA) NEAR THE TEMPLE OF PREAH VIHEAR, SO THAT THE SITUATION COULD RETURN TO THE STATUS PRIOR TO 15 JULY 2008.

UNFORTUNATELY, AS OF 17 JULY 2008 THE SITUATION IS WORSENING DUE TO A CONTINUING INCREASE IN THE NUMBERS OF THAI MILITARY INSIDE AND AROUND THE AREA OF KEO SIKHA KIRI SVARA PAGODA (CALLED PREAH VIHEAR PAGODA) AND THE PRESENCE OF THAI PROTESTERS.

THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IS VERY BAD FOR THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND, THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOUR EXCELLENCY TO TAKE MEASURES TO EASE THE TENSIONS AND

ORDER THE THAI TROOPS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE AREA OF KEO SIKHA  
KIRI SVARA PAGODA (CALLED PREAH VIHEAR PAGODA) NEAR PREAH  
VIHEAR TEMPLE. THESE TROOPS HAVE ENCROACHED ON OUR TERRITORY  
ON 15 JULY 2008, AND HAVE SINCE INCREASED IN NUMBERS RATHER  
THAN WITHDRAWING.

PLEASE ACCEPT, YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST  
CONSIDERATIONS.

SIGNED AND STAMPED

HUN SEN  
PRIME MINISTER  
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

17 JULY

END TEXT.

MUSSOMELI